

JOHN



◆ Play Ball !

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Welcome to JOHN



The dog days of summer are here. Just want to give out a reminder to take care of the pets during these very hot days. Especially the dogs, most do not do well in the heat. The first half of 2018 just seemed to fly by with all the activities that we had and more to come during the rest of the year. Stay cool!

The one thing almost everyone claims to know about Abner Doubleday (1819-1893) was that he invented baseball in Cooperstown, New York, cow pasture. In 1907 an official commission ratified this assertion as gospel truth, but, in recent years, a consensus had formed among historians that Doubleday did no such thing. Certainly, he never claimed credit for the sport. He was, however, a man of many parts. A career Army officer who graduated West Point in 1842. Served in the U.S. Mexican War and was second in command under Major Robert Anderson at the fall of Fort Sumter and rightfully claimed credit for firing the first shot of the Civil War. Enjoy his first hand account of this very historic event.

It is not too often that someone comes across a small town story that was both lived and recalled over the years. The Lawley Family story covers almost 40 years of devotion of one father and four sons to the town they lived in and protected. I was lucky enough to have lived in Erie, Colorado during their years as town marshals and will be telling their story in two parts. Enjoy Part I that recalls the life of the patriarch, William D. (Peck) Lawley who first served the town beginning in 1930. Part II will describe how Peck's four sons went on to serve the town in the same capacity over the years.

The sign of the times announces a long planned reunion of Erie High School attendees with special emphasis on the 40s, 50s and 60s, but the celebration is open to all regardless of when you attended Erie High School in Erie, Colorado. Details covering this event are included within. JAH

By Abner Doubleday in his own words.

The first thing that attracted the eye of the stranger, upon approaching Charleston from the sea, was Fort Sumter. It was built on an artificial island made of large blocks of stone. The walls were of dark brick, and designed for three tiers of guns. The whole structure, as it rose abruptly out of the water, had a gloomy, prison-like appearance. It was situated on the edge of the channel, in the narrowest part of the harbor, between Fort Moultrie and Cummings Point, distant about a mile from the former place, and twelve hundred yards from the latter. The year before, it had been used by us as a temporary place of confinement and security for some negroes that had been brought over from Africa in a slaver captured by one of our naval vessels. The inevitable conflict was very near breaking out at that time; for there was an eager desire on the part of all the people around us to seize these negroes, and distribute them among the plantations; and if the Government had not acted promptly in sending them back to Africa, I think an attempt would have been made to take them from us by force, on the ground that some of them had violated a State law by landing at Moultrieville.



Note: The origins of this story comes from The Project Gutenberg EBook of Reminiscences of Forts Sumter and Moultrie in 1860-'61, by Abner Doubleday

THE BOMBARDMENT

As soon as the outline of our fort could be distinguished, the enemy carried out their programme. It had been arranged, as a special compliment to the venerable Edmund Ruffin, who might almost be called the father of secession, that he should fire the first shot against us, from the Stevens battery on Cummings Point, and I think in all the histories it is stated that he did so; but it is attested by Dr. Crawford and others who were on the parapet at the time, that the first shot really came from the mortar battery at Fort Johnson. Almost immediately afterward a ball from Cummings Point lodged in the magazine wall, and by the sound seemed to bury itself in the masonry about a foot from my head, in very unpleasant proximity to my right ear. This is the one that probably came with Mr. Ruffin's compliments. In a moment the firing burst forth in one continuous roar, and large patches of both the exterior and interior masonry began to crumble and fall in all directions. The place where I was had been used for the manufacture of cartridges, and there was still a good deal of powder there, some packed and some loose. A shell soon struck near the ventilator, and a puff of dense smoke entered the room, giving me a strong impression that there would be an immediate explosion. Fortunately, no sparks had penetrated inside.

Nineteen batteries were now hammering at us, and the balls and shells from the ten-inch columbiads, accompanied by shells from the thirteen-inch mortars which constantly bombarded us, made us feel as if the war had commenced in earnest.

When it was broad daylight, I went down to breakfast. I found the officers already assembled at one of the long tables in the mess-hall. Our party were calm, and even somewhat merry. We had retained one colored man to wait on us. He was a spruce-looking mulatto from Charleston, very active and efficient on ordinary occasions, but now completely demoralized by the thunder of the guns and crashing of the shot around us. He leaned back against the wall, almost white with fear, his eyes closed, and his whole expression one of perfect despair. Our meal was not very sumptuous. It consisted of pork and water, but Dr. Crawford triumphantly brought forth a little farina, which he had found in a corner of the hospital.

continued.....

When this frugal repast was over, my company was told off in three details for firing purposes, to be relieved afterward by Seymour's company. As I was the ranking officer, I took the first detachment, and marched them to the casemates, which looked out upon the powerful iron-clad battery of Cummings Point.

In aiming the first gun fired against the rebellion I had no feeling of self-reproach, for I fully believed that the contest was inevitable, and was not of our seeking. The United States was called upon not only to defend its sovereignty, but its right to exist as a nation. The only alternative was to submit to a powerful oligarchy who were determined to make freedom forever subordinate to slavery. To me it was simply a contest, politically speaking, as to whether virtue or vice should rule.

My first shot bounded off from the sloping roof of the battery opposite without producing any apparent effect. It seemed useless to attempt to silence the guns there; for our metal was not heavy enough to batter the work down, and every ball glanced harmlessly off, except one, which appeared to enter an embrasure and twist the iron shutter, so as to stop the firing of that particular gun.

I observed that a group of the enemy had ventured out from their intrenchments to watch the effect of their fire, but I sent them flying back to their shelter by the aid of a forty-two-pounder ball, which appeared to strike right in among them.

Assistant-surgeon Crawford, having no sick in hospital, volunteered to take command of one of the detachments. He and Lieutenant Davis were detailed at the same time with me; and I soon heard their guns on the opposite side of the fort, echoing my own. They attacked Fort Moultrie with great vigor. Our firing now became regular, and was answered from the rebel guns which encircled us on the four sides of the pentagon upon which the fort was built. The other side faced the open sea. Showers of balls from ten-inch columbiads and forty-two-pounders, and shells from thirteen-inch mortars poured into the fort in one incessant stream, causing great flakes of masonry to fall in all directions. When the immense mortar shells, after sailing high in the air, came down in a vertical direction, and buried themselves in the parade-ground, their explosion shook the fort like an earthquake.

Our own guns were very defective, as they had no breech-sights. In place of these, Seymour and myself were obliged to devise notched sticks, which answered the purpose, but were necessarily very imperfect.



Our fort had been built with reference to the penetration of shot when the old system of smooth-bore guns prevailed. The balls from a new Blakely gun on Cummings Point, however, had force enough to go entirely through the wall which sheltered us, and some of the fragments of brick which were knocked out wounded several of my detachment. None were seriously hurt except Sergeant Thomas Kirnan, of my company. His contusions were severe, but did not keep him out of the fight.

After three hours' firing, my men became exhausted, and Captain Seymour came, with a fresh detachment, to relieve us. He has a great deal of humor in his composition, and said, jocosely, "Doubleday, what in the world is the matter here, and what is all this uproar about?"

I replied, "There is a trifling difference of opinion between us and our neighbors opposite, and we are trying to settle it."

"Very well," he said; "do you wish me to take a hand?"

I said, "Yes, I would like to have you go in."

"All right," he said. "What is your elevation, and range?"

I replied, "Five degrees, and twelve hundred yards."

"Well," he said, "here goes!" And he went to work with a will.



Storm Flag raised at Fort Sumter

As Fort Sumter has considerable historic renown, it may not be uninteresting to relate another incident connected with it, although it is not germane to my narrative. In 1859, after the negroes were taken away, the fort remained in charge of an ordnance-sergeant, who lived there alone with his wife and two little children.

Supplies were sent to him regularly, but in case of emergency he could only communicate with the



shore by means of a small boat. One wild stormy day, when the wind was blowing a gale, he was suddenly struck down with yellow fever. His wife saw that if he did not have immediate medical assistance he would die. She herself could not go, as he required constant attention, and the children were too young to be of any service. A day passed on, and it became evident that he was growing worse. In a frantic state of mind, she rushed up to the top of the fort, waved a sheet backward and forward, and raised and lowered the garrison flag repeatedly, in hopes of attracting the attention of some passing vessel; but although several went by, no one seemed to notice the signals, or, if they did, they would not stop, on account of the tempest, which still continued. She then took the desperate resolution of putting her two little children in the small boat, and trusting to the flood-tide to drift them somewhere in the vicinity of Charleston. She placed a letter in the hand of one of them, to be given to the first person they met, imploring that a physician might be sent to her at once. It was a terrible experiment, for the children might easily have been swept out to sea by the ebb-tide before they could make a landing. They succeeded, however, in reaching the shore near Mount Pleasant. A doctor finally arrived, but too late to be of any service.

The Lawley Family - Part I

William D. (Peck) Lawley

by John A. Holley Jr.

Erie, Colorado is situated within the triangle area of Denver, Boulder and Longmont. The 30s, 40s and 50s marked Erie as a mining and farming community. Throughout these decades the town's population really did not change much. There was a slight population surge from 1930 to 1940, which went from 930 to 1019 counted citizens according to the U. S. Census conducted at the time. In the 1950 Census the population showed a drop back to 937.

About midway through the 40s, the main street (Briggs St.) running through Erie was paved with a tar type material. I remember it as a tar material because as we sit on the curb and watched the workers, they encouraged us to handle it and even "chew" on it. This suggestion was quickly put to an end by the mothers that were watching over us. The paving extended the length of Briggs St. to the intersection of Cheesman St. and then on up Cheesman to meet up with the County Line Rd. There was a flashing red light installed at the Briggs/Cheesman intersection and when it worked it served to caution drivers to be careful at the turn.

There was a newspaper, "The Erie Herald" that was published from 1933 to 1949. Many coal mines opened and closed during these decades. Including the Boulder Valley and Clayton mines that were closed in 1943 because of lack of men to do the work because most of the young men were serving in the war. In 1941 prices were frozen on many food items and salaries were frozen too. Rationing started on gas, sugar, coffee, and other food items. Gas was rationed to 4 gallons a week in 1942. In 1943 it was reported by the Greeley Tribune that a Ft. Collins restaurant posted a sign "Use less sugar, stir like hell and don't mind the noise".

One big high school event in the 40s was that increased enrollment in the high school meant that our football team was able to move from six-man team to play eleven-man football.

Erie was a place where kids were allowed to go anywhere in town and we were safe not only on the streets, but in the houses of so many good people. I have a lot of good memories. I wish my Grandchildren had some of the freedom and experiences we had to remember. (Janice Watkins Wingate class of 1957).

This feeling of safety and comfort most of us experienced growing up in Erie leads into the main purpose of this Lawley Family story. Doing research and recalling my own experiences brought me to a startling discovery about the men of the Lawley family who served the town of Erie from the 1930s and well into the 60s.

The first member of the Lawley family to serve as town marshal was William D. (Peck) Lawley who started his service in 1930 and remained active in the town's law enforcement until around 1948.

(Note: some historical sources identify this position as Town Constable, so I will use the terms marshal and constable inter-changeable depending on the sources).

William (Peck) Lawley's career in law enforcement didn't start out as one would expect. When he was 11 years old he broke into a store in Erie and took certain goods. He was caught and his friends becoming alarmed at his ill conduct stated the facts at the trial and Peck was sentenced to the State Industrial School for Boys for a time. It can be noted that during this time, his family was going through some rough times, his father, Robert and mother, Martha had divorced and she quickly remarried to Edward Lewis. The Lawley children stayed together with their mother and new step dad per the 1900 U. S. census. Leading up to his career in law enforcement, Peck was listed as a teamster in the 1920 U.S. census. He had married Grace Pearl Kershner and two sons were included this census, Alvin Wilferd age 2 and Robert George born on May 26, 1919. The family was living on Briggs St. This place on Briggs Street was on the edge of town and because Peck was becoming well known in Erie, most of the locals knew and referred to it as just the Lawley place.

During this time period, one incident of note was that Peck was injured when he tried to stop a runaway team of horses pulling a harrow. He was injured when the harrow ran over him as he stopped the runaway team. His injuries were painful but did not injure him too bad.

Peck turned to farming for a time and was elected as town constable of Erie and begin his service on Aug 1st 1930. In addition to farming and serving as town constable, Peck and Grace were busy raising a growing family, which now consisted of four sons and one daughter. Serving as town constable agreed with him and in 1934 he announced his intention to run for Weld County Sheriff. The Greeley Tribune noted that "Peck" enjoys an enviable reputation in Southwest Weld County as a peace officer and with the support of the United Mine Worker and the Farmers Union, he will be hard to beat. I could not find any record of the 1934 election for the Weld County sheriff's job, but believe that Peck did not win this election.

Over the years, the Erie town marshal's job evolved into a much greater service to the town. One job added to the marshal's duties was to maintain the dirt roads by regular grading and doing other road repairs as needed. In addition to the road chores, the town marshal was required to oversee the operation of the Erie Water plant. Doing safe water tests and repairing the pumps and keeping watch of the main water supply which was the Erie lake, which the town owned along with water rights to make sure that Erie did have a safe water supply. These duties kept the marshal busy and for the most part, law enforcement amounted to patrolling the "beer joints" on the weekends and making sure that any disturbance was quickly subdued and sometimes this meant that a few citizens could count on having themselves locked in the Erie jail for a "drying out" period. There were several occasions during Peck's tenure that were a little more than dealing with the drunks. The Erie Bank was held up three times with two of the holdups coming within 90 days of each other in 1933. The three bandits were never caught, but Peck was able to describe the bandits and the getaway car from eye witnesses accounts which he then turned over to the Sheriff's Department. The three bank employees that were held at gun point were not harmed and the money lost was covered by insurance. The second robbery netted the holdup men some \$2300.

As noted above, Peck was well respected in Erie. He had a rough look about him and he could be rough at times. This was appreciated in a town that could get a little wild especially on the weekends. I remember him as a "Billy the Kid" kind of person. He wore a vest and his clothes for the most part showed that he was a working farmer in addition to his marshal duties. He always displayed his badge and us kids were always a little scared of him. I do not remember him as ever being unfriendly toward us.

In 1944 there was a shooting in town. It took place just a couple of houses from the Erie Hotel on Briggs Street. Marshal Lawley was called to the house by a neighbor who was going to visit John A. Stevens. He was found in the bedroom, the victim of an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound. Peck called the coroner after his initial examination of the scene. After the coroner viewed the body, he quickly called the Weld County Sheriff who worked with Peck to examine the evidence and question Mr. Steven's three sons who all lived close by their dad's residence. The three sons were jailed and questioned separately and their stories matched up so they were fully exonerated. Marshal Lawley's testimony was key at the inquest. The findings of this inquest jury was in conflict with the coroner's jury which had ruled the death a suicide. Since John Stevens was a heavy drinker and was still grieving the loss of his wife several years ago, the three sons chose to believe that their Dad had indeed taken his own life. This opinion was not accepted by John's sister, Harriet Holley who maintained that her brother did not shoot himself and it was an act of someone else. Her opinion was upheld by the inquest jury that relied heavily on marshal Lawley's testimony. Detailed accounts of this case was published in the Greeley Tribune on July 25, 1944. Note of interest, Harriet Holley was my Grandmother and John Stevens was my Great uncle.

William David (Peck) Lawley passed away in 1949 and is buried alongside his wife, Grace who died in 1945. Their final resting place is the Mount Pleasant Cemetery in Erie, Colorado.



There was no question in the eyes of the citizens of Erie that Marshal Peck Lawley had served the town well and was remembered as such. But the Lawley story was just beginning, Part II will cover the Lawley sons and their service to Erie. This part will be more detailed because I will have the privilege of sharing my own personal experiences with Peck's three of the four sons, who also served the town of Erie as marshals. JAH

Hello Former Classmates, **It is the sign of the times**

The Erie High School reunion has been scheduled for September 15th 2018. This get together will be part of the Erie Historical Society's booth at the **16th Annual Erie Biscuit Day to be held from 8 am to 12 noon on September 15, 2018.**

This reunion is intended for those who attended Erie High School prior to 1970.

Here is what has been scheduled for the event:



Erie Biscuit Day - September 15th 8 am to 12 noon in Historic Downtown Erie, CO on Briggs Street.

EHS graduates will be present and available to meet and greet those interested in hearing about their Erie and EHS experiences.

Right after Biscuit Day ends - EHS graduates will conduct walking tours of Erie showing the houses they lived in and other sites of interest.

Sign-up sheet will be available during the regular Biscuit Day hours.

Evening of Biscuit Day - Informal dinner at a local restaurant, pricing and details to follow. Open to all, but Optional

Sunday, Sept 16th. Alan and Sarah Wise will be opening the Wise Museum from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm. This is a special favor and we hope that you will plan on attending. There will be light refreshments available at no charge for attendees. Donations will be appreciated.

General Information:

Classmates are encouraged to start collecting EHS memories, Photos, stories, Annuals and anything else to display at the Biscuit day booth. Please prepare a short write up telling about your life after leaving Erie High school.

There will be a memory board honoring those who are no longer with us. Photos are encouraged. Submit to John Holley or bring the information with you.

At Biscuit Day, A/V and other media will be available. If you have a Slideshow or other media that you would like to share, alert John as to what you need. We may have Skype or Face Time setup to connect with those who will not be attending in person.

A full schedule will be available soon. Plan on a direct email, FB posting or other media outlets as all the details firm up over the next couple of months.

The main point of contact will be John A. Holley, class of 1957. He can be reached at 505-892-2419, holley08@msn.com or holley07@msn.com or on his website holleypix.com

FRESH FLOWERS



I have been very happy with my homes, but homes really are no more than the people who live in them.

Nancy Reagan